

(b) All jute and jute products were exempted from excise duty in the budget for 1997-98 to revive and give a thrust to the ailing jute industry.

(c) and (d) In view of the impending budget, it is not possible to indicate any response.

Financial irregularities by M/s. Reliance Petroleum Ltd.

606. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that M/s Reliance Petroleum Ltd. have been indulging in financial irregularities in the Public Issue funds of their refinery project and complaints have been made to Government in this regards;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what action, if any, has been taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) to (c) The required information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Loan to Farmers

† 607. SHRI D.P. YADAV: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to provide loan to the farmers on the pattern of the industries for purchasing land; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) and (b) Finance Minister during his meeting with the Chief Executives of Public Sector Banks on 14 November, 2000 emphasized the need to step up priority sector

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

lending and desired that banks should examine financing farmers for purchase of agricultural land and boost agricultural produce and further emphasized to formulate a suitable scheme for the purpose. As a sequel, to this Indian Banks' Association (IBA) has framed a scheme and forwarded it to the Ministry of Finance. The same is being examined in consultation with Reserve Bank of India (RBI)/ National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

International Status of IDBI

† 608. SHRI D.P. YADAV: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state: whether Government are working on any scheme to give the status of international bank of IDBI; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): No proposal is under consideration at this stage to give the status of universal bank to IDBI.

Impact of Fifth Pay Commission's Report on States

609. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether government are aware that the implementation of the Fifth Pay Commission's recommendations has caused financial crisis in some States and made them unable to spend on social sectors even; and

(b) if so, the steps taken for those States in order to redress their financial crunch?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) The Eleventh Finance Commission in their main report for 2000—05 has observed that the impact of Fifth Pay Commission has aggravated budget imbalances of the States which has impacted adversely on social services.

(b) The Eleventh Finance Commission has assessed the revenue

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